



## Ecological Restoration at Eagle Creek

### Where is Eagle Creek?

Eagle Creek flows into Yosemite Valley immediately west of the Three Brothers rock formation and joins the Merced River about ½ mile downstream from Yosemite Lodge. The reach of Eagle Creek between Northside Drive and the Merced River is badly eroded and only sparsely vegetated, partly due to trampling by pedestrians.

### Why was the area in need of restoration?

Visitors to this area park at a small unpaved turnout just east of the Eagle Creek channel. Many people walk down into the creek or down toward the Merced River, preventing re-establishment of riparian vegetation and compacting the fine, erosive soils on the site. Additionally, an abandoned 1920s-era sewer system and related structures were located in the creek and near its banks. Removal of these structures will allow natural riparian vegetation to return.

### What type of work was completed?

National Park Service Resources Management Ecological Restoration staff re-contoured and then re-vegetated the eroded riverbank, decompacted the soils along the trampled river terrace, and constructed fencing to direct visitors to sandbars for river access.

This ecological restoration effort also involved the following:

- Plugged remaining portions of abandoned sewage lines with concrete, and removed the manhole and the concrete structure that crosses the creekbed.
- Restored the eroded creek channel using methods previously—and successfully—tested on the banks of the Merced River. Restoration techniques require building up the bank with willow cuttings, woody debris, rock, and mulch.
- Revegetated the bank of Eagle Creek with native shrubs, cuttings, and seeds.
- Redirected visitors to access the river in a more appropriate location that will not cause further bank erosion.

The Eagle Creek restoration effort is one of several ecological restoration projects ongoing in Yosemite National Park. Although it was completed toward the end of 2002, National Park Service staff will continue to monitor the success of the project by re-surveying the creek, monitoring vegetation changes, and revisiting previously photographed benchmarks.

This project is being funded through donations from The Yosemite Fund.